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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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report containing information on the training of civil airline pilots in Poland.

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Civil Airline Training in PolandGeneral Information

1. There was no official school in Poland where complete training was given to future air crew members of Poland's one civil airline, LOT. With very few exceptions, all personnel who flew civil airliners were former military personnel who had received their initial flight training in Polish Air Force schools. A small number of individuals became airline pilots without the benefit of military training; however, they had to be licensed pilots prior to applying for a position with the airline. Latter personnel received flight training in aeroclubs and were generally hired by the airline because of political or personal influence. Stewardesses had no military training. Although LOT did not possess a school where complete pilot, navigator, or radio-operator training was given, it had a small training department located at its headquarters at Warsaw/Okecie Airfield (N 52-10, E 21-58). A branch of this training department was located at Bielsko Airfield (N 49-48, E 19-00) where it was operated in cooperation with the Polish aeroclub organization.

Selection of Personnel

2. Former bomber pilots constituted the majority of airline pilots. Because of the gradual reduction of the Polish Bomber Force throughout 1955 and 1956, a great number of bomber aircraft crew members were released from active duty and were subsequently hired by LOT, which was under expansion. Individuals who had a substantial number of hours in multi-engine aircraft and possessed a clean military record upon being discharged from either the air force or the navy, received first priority. Second priority was given to any pilot who had any experience in multi-engine aircraft. Fighter pilots received last priority. If for example, a fighter pilot had about 500 hours to his credit and a multi-engine aircraft pilot had only 100 hours, the latter individual was selected. Except as stated above, whereby some personnel who had no military training or experience were hired because of certain connections, as a general rule civilians were not hired because aeroclub experience was not considered sufficient. Those who were hired were generally trained to become mail pilots and seldom became crew members of passenger airplanes.
3. All applicants, on the other hand, had to show membership in an aeroclub. When a military pilot was released from active duty and contemplated an airline position, his first step was to join an aeroclub. Only then could he proceed with his application. For aeroclub membership, a candidate had to pass a flight physical examination and had to be mentally and politically acceptable. The medical examination administered by an aeroclub was automatically accepted by the airline. These medical examinations

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were administered in Wroclaw, on Ulica (street) Generala Swierczewskiego, at the Central Institute for Air Medical Examinations (Civil) (Centralny Instytut Badawniczo-Lekarsko Lotniczy (Cywilny)). All aeroclubs in Poland were served by this institute and all prospective members were compelled to travel to Wroclaw at their own expense to take the flight physical.

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The institute was manned by civilian personnel.

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4. The last requirement to become a LOT pilot was documentary proof of flying experience. No flight test was administered. If a pilot met the above requirements, he was hired, provided of course that a position was available. However, being hired was no guarantee of a position; an individual still had to successfully complete the airline's training phase and be cleared by the Office of Internal Security.

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Training

5. Training for future airline pilots was conducted at Okecie and Bielsko Airfields. The latter field was used for basic training whereas advance training was conducted at Okecie. If the trainee had a substantial number of hours in multi-engine aircraft and was just recently discharged by the air force, his initial training merely consisted of several touch-and-go landings. If he executed those successfully, he then made several trips aboard a liner as an observer and then was given a position as a co-pilot. Training periods had no specific lengths of time but rather depended on an individual's past experience. Pilots who had little or no experience in multi-engine aircraft, or those who had a longer break in flying, were first sent to Bielsko Airfield where they received a refresher course conducted by experienced LOT pilots. However, aeroclub personnel were administratively responsible for all courses conducted at Bielsko. When a pilot completed the training phase here, he was then transferred to Okecie where he received his final check flight.

Aircraft

6. All aircraft utilized to train prospective airline pilots, whether at Okecie or Bielsko, were the property of LOT. The following types of airplanes were utilized for training purposes: Aero-45; a small Czechoslovakian twin-engine transport- ANT-2; a single engine transport - Douglas; and a twin-engine transport. Also available were Po-2 and Junak type aircraft.

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Summary

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[redacted] the LOT training courses, whether conducted at Bielsko or Okecie, were simple affairs where a certain LOT pilot was assigned one or two individuals and was required to teach them whatever he thought they should know. Since LOT was a small organization and candidates far outnumbered job vacancies, the airline was not pressed for crew members and could therefore select "the cream of the crop".

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